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A Hero in the Hallway

Travis Cuch stepped in to save the day after a student at Salt River Schools experienced a life-threatening medical emergency. "All my training took over."

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE
O'dham Action News
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It was a regular Tuesday morning in August for Salt River Schools Custodial Supervisor Travis Cuch. He got in his truck at home, drove to work at the Accelerated Learning Academy and was ready for the workday. A new school year had just started, and with that came a new crop of students with their own personalities, stories and interests.

On that morning, Cuch was making his school building rounds near the art classroom. He was cleaning the campus and tidying up one of the nearby classrooms, something he's been doing for the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community for nearly a decade.

"I was just doing my daily thing, dusting cobwebs, checking areas and windowsills. I was minding my business, listening to my music," Cuch recalled.

Then, in the blink of an eye, everything changed. *Continued on page 12*

WALK FOR O'ODHAM PIIPAASH HELD IN SALT RIVER



The popular walk began near the Huhugam Ki: Museum and made for a two-mile loop.

BY ANDREEA MIGUEL
O'dham Action News
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They walked for our O'dham and Piipaash past, present, and future.

Dozens gathered early on Friday, Sept. 25, at the Two Waters Courtyard in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community for the annual Walk for O'dham Piipaash. The popular walk featured Community members, tribal government employees and others.

The walk was organized by Community Relations Office's Events Division.

SRPMIC Vice-President Ricardo Leonard gave opening remarks and provided partici-

pants with words of encouragement along with prayers for everyone. He reminded us, the walk is a prayer for our O'dham and Piipaash past, present, and future. He also reminded participants to be aware of the rez dogs who choose to participate in the walk.

Everyone was getting pumped and ready to walk by doing dynamic stretches to get the blood flow going. And just like that, participants were led to the starting point of the walk.

The two-mile walk began near the Huhugam Ki: Museum, participants walked down Osborn Road and made a left on Dobson Road to Thomas Road

Continued on page 3

Salt River Goes Extraterrestrial at The Day the Rez Stood Still: The 4th Kind



Cosplayer Cholo Myers, who became a fixture of the horror cosplay community over the past few years, made his last cosplay appearance at the The Day the Rez Stood Still: The 4th Kind.

BY CHRIS PICCIUOLO
O'dham Action News
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That gruesomely spooky crew, the Woodenhead Collective, was up to their usual tricks (and treats!) at their old haunt, the Salt River Community Building, on Sept. 26.

This time, the ghosts of horror markets past and present floated

3 Takeaways:

- The fourth year of *The Day the Rez Stood Still* was an alien-themed experience for cosplayers.
- The Woodenhead Collective put together the horror market for the public.
- Members of the Collective and fellow cosplayers share their love of horror and the community impact events like this have.

through a free extraterrestrial experience from out of this world at The Day the Rez Stood Still: The 4th Kind.

"This show has grown from one, two, three and to four. With four, we went the sci-fi route," said Dominic Martinez, a.k.a. Bigg D. Evol, the master of ceremonies for the Woodenhead Collective.

"For years and years, aliens have been in Arizona, whether you know it or not. So, why not welcome them and bring them to Salt River?" he said.

Hundreds of interplanetary beings came in peace to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and be with fellow cosplayers, take photos with an alien and a giant Krusty the Clown, buy frightening gifts at the market, and gorge on horror-themed food and beverages.

Continued on page 8



Two Waters was the place to be in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community on Native American Recognition Day, Sept. 22. The line for free Harkins popcorn was worth the wait!

All Tribal Communities Celebrated at NARD

BY CHRIS PICCIUOLO
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Native American culture took center stage at the Two Waters Courtyard in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community on Sept. 22 for an all-day Native American Recognition Day celebration.

"Tonight is all about us celebrating different tribes across the state and the country," said SRPMIC Events Assistant

Sommer Lopez as the Two Rivers chicken scratch band boomed an infectious waila groove in the moonlit distance.

Lopez said that this event was a moment for the Community to see what other cultures and tribes all are about, including by scoping out some Native arts and crafts at the artisan market.

The scene outside the Round House Café during the daytime celebration was soundtracked by a live blues performance from the Sir Harrison Band, led by Diné guitarist Harrison Begay. As guests stepped into the courtyard, they were greeted by a Red Bull can-shaped Mini Cooper (which included free Red Bull!) and a bright-red

Continued on page 17

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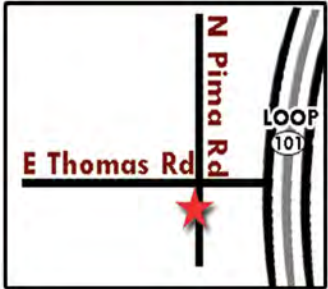
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Sovereign Roads, Safer Futures

3 Takeaways:

- The Tribal Transportation Summit was coordinated by the SRPMIC, city officials and Kimley-Horn, an engineering and planning firm that specializes in transportation planning and land development.
- Input received during the summit will be analyzed to create a Community-wide plan to improve the safety of the roads and sidewalks.
- Since July 2020, more than 2,500 collisions have occurred in the Community.

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE
O'odham Action News
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The safety of our loved ones in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community is an important topic for many.

On Sept. 29, the SRPMIC held its Transportation Safety Summit at the Community Building. Members of the Arizona Department of Transportation, the City of Scottsdale the SRPMIC Council attended the event.

For some time now, executive staff members from Kimley-Horn, an engineering and planning firm that specializes in transportation planning and land development, have been working closely with SRPMIC staff to create an exclusive plan to improve the roads and sidewalks in the Community.

“We have some data that goes as far back as June 2012,” said Kimley-Horn Transportation Planner Chris Joannes.

During the presentation, Joannes and his team presented data, which included the number of collisions the Community experienced over the last five years. Unfortunately, every year has seen an increase in accidents. From July 2020 to June 2021, there were 400 collisions in the Community. From July 2024 to June 2025, there were 554.

Various ideas brainstormed from the summit involve potentially introducing energy-efficient

lights along the Community’s sidewalks by the bus stop benches, researching the positives of applying a grey coating to black asphalt to increase nighttime visibility, creating frequent educational public service announcements on seat belt safety and proper driving techniques, and much more.

“We hear a lot of concerns about the issues in our Community,” said SRPMIC President Martin Harvier. “I’m glad we’re getting together to talk about how we can make the Community safer. Just yesterday I was going home, and as I was coming to the stop sign at an intersection, a car just blew right through it.”

He added, “Part of me wondered, ‘Do these people feel they can just not obey the law in our Community?’”

Council member Jacob Butler also attended the summit. He thanked the officials for collaborating with the Community to improve the safety for all. As he viewed the maps detailing the accident data, he also revealed that he personally knew two of the three fatalities listed on the map.

“One of those red dots is my family member. The other red dot was my good friend. I still think about them when I’m at the stop sign,” he said.

He continued, “When my children leave in the morning, we tell each other we love each other. Because the reality is, you don’t know if you’re going to come back. Through studies like these and the actions of people in this room, we can help make it a reality that we can all go home to our families in a good way.”

Joannes and others from Kimley-Horn will continue to have a presence in the Community as they gather more data and work closely alongside SRPMIC Roads Section Manager Jennifer Jack.

There will soon be an online forum available for individuals to submit feedback regarding the safety of the Community’s roads and sidewalks. All finalized plans regarding the feedback received from the summit will be presented to Council next year.

O’odham Action News will continue to monitor this story.



Salt River Police Department Lieutenant Ramon Penunuri networked and gave great insight of the SRPMIC during the safety summit.



Salt River Public Works Director Josh Sciacca provided his expertise regarding the many ways the SRPMIC can work with state officials to improve the safety of the streets and roads.

WALK FOR O'ODHAM PIIPAASH HELD IN SALT RIVER

Continued from cover

and turned right onto Longmore Road where it ended the same place it started. The Events team provided rides back to Two Waters from the one-mile mark and wherever assistance was needed.

Water stations were available in areas along the route to help participants stay hydrated along the route.

When the walk concluded, traditional O'odham and Piipaash songs were heard while waiting in line for breakfast that was provided by the CRO Events staff. Those who finished were rewarded with the choice of a gold medal or a shell necklace for showing their endurance for the walk. Walkers also received a participation shirt.



Participants gather in the Two Waters Courtyard for dynamic stretching before the walk began.



All smiles for these ladies finishing the 2-mile walk!



Teniya Salazar (left) and family enjoying themselves as the walk begins.



Kameron Tom (right) and a friend enjoying their time walking along Dobson Road.



Families carry each other through the tough times.



Two besties waiting for the walk to start while rocking the event t-shirts.



As participants finish, they celebrate by posing for the cameras.



Traditional Piipaash singers sang songs for those who crossed the finish line.



Daniel Smith Sr. showing his enthusiasm as he walks along the route.



Parents, guardians and Community members listen to Salt River Schools updates at the Early Childhood Education Center Gathering Place on Sept. 15 for the Superintendent Stakeholder Committee.

BY CHRIS PICCIUOLO
O’odham Action News
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Parents and guardians of students attending Salt River Schools showed up to the Early Childhood Education Center Gathering Place on Sept. 15 for the Superintendent Stakeholder Committee meeting to lend their voices and hear about what’s new this school year.

Key topics on the agenda included the new truancy ordinance, Higher Ed-ucation funding, disciplinary procedures at the schools, what’s happening at the Accelerated Learning Academy, and a conversation about an incident that impacted Salt River Elementary School a few days prior, on Sept. 11. The Salt River Police Department was on hand to give a brief overview of the in-cident.

Leadership and Food Services Talk Values and Culture

After a prayer and dinner, Salt River Schools Superintendent Cheryl Houston welcomed all in attendance with a refresher on the core values of Salt River Schools.

Houston said the work at Salt River Schools is forever grounded in O’odham and Piipaash culture and language (roots), strengthened by Education Board governance and accountability (a safe and secure

river), guided and sustained by ongoing professional development opportunities (the harvest of improvement across academics and careers), and inspired by critical engagement with the students, families and Community they are blessed serve (the sunrise on next generations).

Food Service Manager Shannon Reina discussed how Salt River Food Ser-vices is teaching and enforcing

healthy eating. The Food Services team will be incorporating more O’odham and Piipaash culture into school menus, from ingredients to vocabulary words. The team reported that a new cook position has been added, there has been a 49% increase in student breakfast partici-pation since April 2026, and a team of students at the Accelerated Learning Academy will participate in the 2027 Blue Watermelon Project “Feeding the Future” contest.

New Partnership With SCC, CCDF Funding Expands Early Childhood Education Opportunities

Child Care Development Fund Certificate Program liaisons were present to talk about CCDF funds and how they have impacted students. CCDF funding helped open the Eagles Nest at the Accelerated Learning Academy, three in-fant/toddler classrooms and one preschool classroom. The funding added 18 positions and provides services to 40 children.

In an enrollment and strategy update for the schools, parents were in-formed about Salt River Higher Education’s recent accomplishments. A new partnership with Scottsdale Community College’s American Indian Program will offer Higher Education office hours during certain events to increase stu-dent access to support. Other accomplishments include continued student and family engagement with program orientations and FAFSA workshops,

3 Takeaways:

- The Salt River Schools Superintendent Stakeholder Committee held a meeting in September to inform parents about updates from each grade level in the new school year.
- After an incident impacted Salt River Elementary School, parents and guardians discussed the incident with school staff and the Salt River Police Department and learned more about policies in place to inform families if there is a perceived threat.
- Learn about upcoming events at Salt River Schools and exciting opportunities for students.

ongoing provided Community-informed services, and expanding access to higher ed-ucation and career training.

More key updates from the Superintendent Stakeholder Committee:

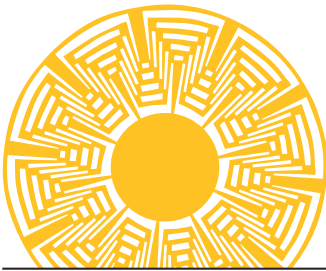
- School & Community Relations: Attendance improvement incentive program to recognize and reward improved attendance each semester. Strengthening truancy monitoring and student support with improved communication.
- Staff and engagement strategy from Education Social Services: The Child Find program has been rebranded as SEED (Supporting Early Education & Development) and increased ESS program visibility.
- Early Childhood Education Center engagement highlights: the Fatherhood Program launched Aug. 21 with 15 participants, 10 fathers and five mothers. Upcoming events at ECEC include the Goodie Gathering (Oct. 16), Native American Recognition Days (Nov. 16–20), Winter Celebration (Dec. 11), Pizza With Po-lice (Jan. 22) and Big Wheel Day (Jan. 27).
- Salt River Elementary School is hiring an ESS teacher and is beginning interviews for a music teacher. SRES is actively educating parents about bullying awareness and prevention.
- Accelerated Learning Academy initiatives include monthly student leadership activities/meetings; student mentorship, internship and work-study programs; Chef in the Garden; parenting classes and Eagles Nest ECEC partnership; new Scottsdale Community College music partnership; and a new attendance clerk position to support the truancy ordinance.

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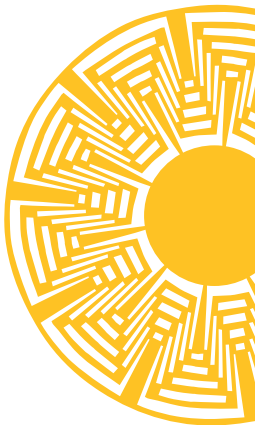
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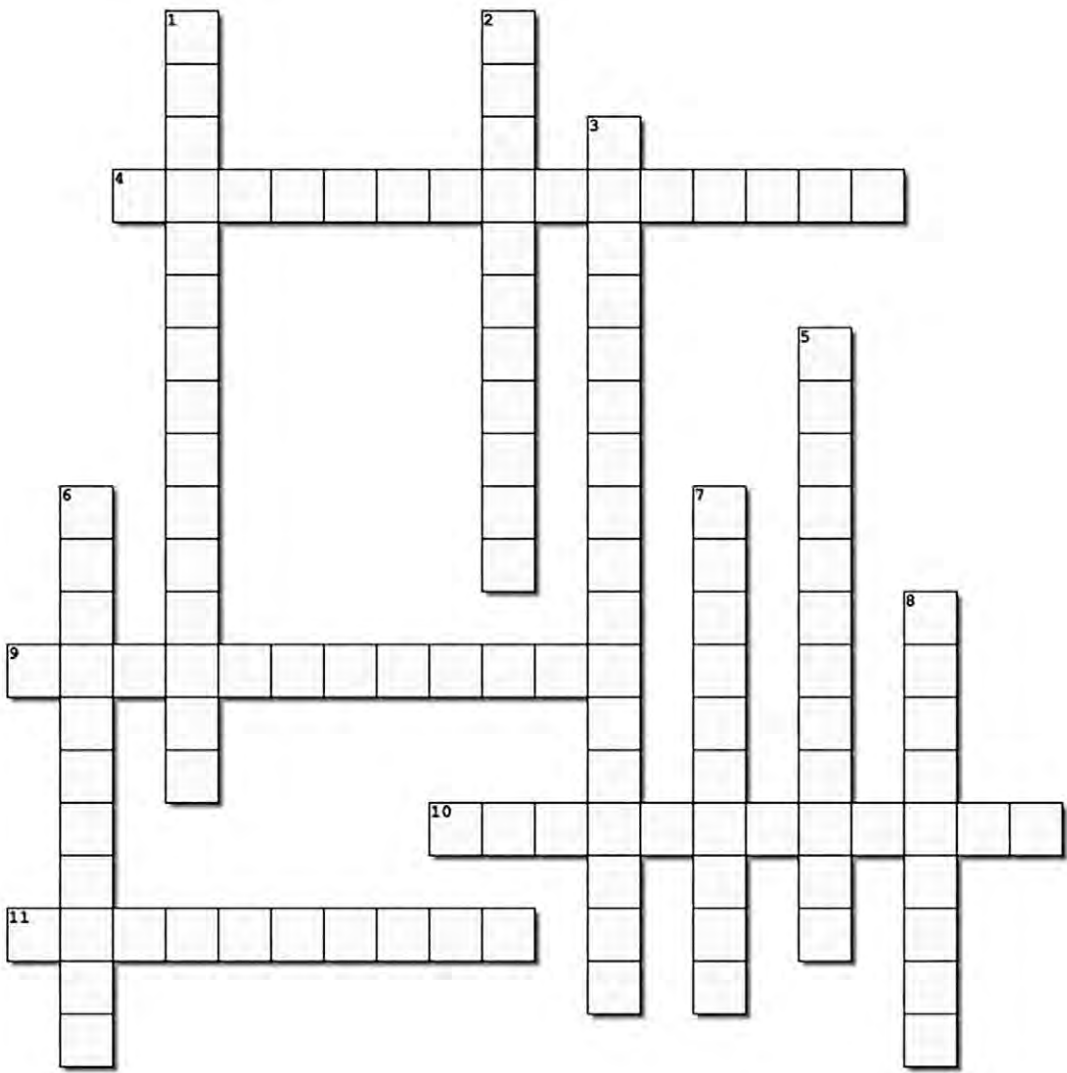
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Can you solve the crossword puzzle?

The answers to this crossword puzzle can be found in the stories throughout this issue of O’odham Action News. Enjoy!



Across

- 4. The performing musical group during Monday’s daytime NARD celebration.
- 9. Salt River Schools Food Services Manager.
- 10. The C.E.O. of Talking Stick Resort and Casino Arizona.
- 11. The 64th Miss Indian Arizona.

Down

- 1. The first and last name of Woodenhead Collective’s own, Bigg D. Evol.
- 2. The band that played during Sialik King’s Miss Indian Farewell Celebration at the Community Building.
- 3. The C.E.O. of the Phoenix Indian Center.
- 5. The SRPMIC Roads Section Safety Manager.
- 6. SRPMIC Deputy Fire Chief for Operations.
- 7. The “hero in the hallway” who saved a student’s life at ALA.
- 8. The ALA building Sialik King’s Youth Cultural Showcase was held in.

News and Events In and Around Indian Country

BY DALTON WALKER
O’odham Action News
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Arizona Hosts Tribal Energy Summit

The Arizona Governor’s Office of Tribal Relations hosted its Tribal Energy Summit & Workshop in September. The event brought state officials, tribal nations and industry experts together to discuss energy priorities, suggest state-tribal partnerships and explore opportunities for infrastructure development. The summit was held at the Arizona State Capitol Executive Tower in Phoenix on Sept. 22. The event was cohosted by the Arizona Governor’s Office of Resiliency.

Tohono O’odham Community College Earns Carnegie Sustainability Classification

Tohono O’odham Community College in Sells has earned the new Carnegie Elective Classification for Sustainability, becoming one of the first 14 colleges and universities in the nation to receive the designation. The school is the lone tribally run college recognized. The new national classification recognizes colleges and universities that demonstrate how sustainability is integrated throughout the institution. Tohono O’odham Community College will retain the classification through 2033. The college is grounded in the Tohono O’odham Himdag through curriculum, programs, policies and how institutional practices are formed, developed and implemented.

Tribe Sells WNBA Team

The WNBA’s Connecticut Sun wrapped up its regular season in September and its last in its current form.

The Mohegan Tribe purchased the franchise for \$10 million in 2003, becoming the first tribe to own a professional sports team. Now, the tribe is moving on from the WNBA.

The tribe sold the Sun to the Houston Rockets for \$300 million, and the team is relocating to Texas starting next season. The deal was announced last year.

Native Health Awarded Indian Health Service Grant

Native Health in Phoenix was among the 14 tribal and urban Native communities and organizations to be awarded funding from the Indian Health Service Produce Prescription Pilot Program. Native Health will receive up to \$250,000 to implement a produce prescription program. The pilot program was established in 2023.

Talking Stick Resort Amphitheatre Named Best Large Concert Venue

The Phoenix New Times named a popular outdoor venue in the West Valley its Best Large Concert Venue. The 20,000-person Talking Stick Resort Amphitheatre took the top spot in the Best of Phoenix 2026 Nightlife. Talking Stick Resort is the venue’s naming-rights sponsor.

Spooky Word Search

Find the O’odham and Piipaash words from the list below!

A	F	J	J	H	K	E	U	Y	X	Z	W	K	O	\$	V	A	q	M	Q
X	N	A	N	A	K	M	E	L	A	L	Y	Y	V	T	’	U	\$	N	W
T	\$	O	P	Q	B	I	I	Z	K	’	S	A	R	A	V	T	Y	Z	E
M	L	M	H	U	D	O	N	K	B	C	I	A	E	Ñ	I	H	N	’	S
F	I	N	R	:	E	O	J	L	D	Ñ	M	K	G	X	:	Y	A	A	M
H	N	:	q	F	\$	’	I	U	O	D	N	K	H	O	W	A	Z	L	N
O	Ñ	A	T	W	I	H	L	M	C	K	M	T	\$	’	O	M	P	Z	q
M	’	W	S	O	L	H	E	:	G	L	N	H	Q	O	Z	N	E	H	K
I	K	H	T	V	L	G	:	N	D	U	M	R	L	C	\$	Y	J	I	K
H	L	M	q	T	Z	U	E	q	G	L	J	A	q	J	Q	K	H	A	F
U	U	X	U	W	Y	F	q	E	’	S	O	A	P	’	Y	O	S	Ñ	H
G	S	J	U	U	A	S	’	Y	Z	I	F	K	E	\$	E	R	M	M	N
V	H	E	Q	X	V	H	Z	W	I	K	K	X	Z	W	T	M	N	I	Y
V	A	L	q	O	X	I	R	:	I	’	B	K	J	R	’	O	A	’	A
K	X	Z	M	S	H	I	I	D	E	E	V	K	Z	H	Z	Ñ	P	Z	A
O	K	P	W	\$	W	V	R	L	X	Ñ	A	Z	M	I	I	M	’	Q	Y
M	’	A	X	Z	P	S	Q	T	Y	B	q	C	Y	U	q	Q	R	T	U
I	Ñ	Y	Z	E	S	E	P	I	J	I	G	M	A	\$	A	D	A	S	U
K	T	H	R	’	U	Y	K	A	Ñ	S	K	V	T	’	H	N	E	’	S
’	A	Y	U	U	M	N	Y	E	E	A	S	\$	H	:	Ñ	M	D	A	H

<u>O’ODHAM</u>	KOŞVA , Skull	<u>PIPAASH</u>	NYAA YUUSH , Fall
MI:TOL , Cat	IHUG , Devils claw	MSHIDEEVK , Scary	MIIM , Cry
E:EP , Blood	NANAKMEL , Bat	KTHR’UYK , Behave	WIKK , Help
O’O , Bone	HUDONK , Evening	KYAAK KTHRAAK , Go build a fire	SHAXK , Be smelly, rotten
VAIÑOM , Knife	HIAÑ , Tarantula	THYAM NYKORM , Late night	’AYUU MNYEE , Candy
SEPIJIG MAŞAD , October			KMUUVILYIK , Hurry
LULSI , Candy			QWESM , Orange



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“Blergh gnuurk blrrp shnorff blee-gh blarrk,” grunted event coordinator Dushane Manuel, a.k.a. The Salt River Buzzsaw.

Other members of the Woodenhead Collective include Event Coordinator Raeann Brown, a.k.a. Lady Ray; Media Team leader Seneca Silverhorn, a.k.a. Spike the Warlord; and Dwayne Manuel, a.k.a. Professor Possessor, who brings his artistic ideas to the group.

A cosplayer who goes by the name “Not Bob” was dressed in an eerie costume called “Art and His Pony,” holding what looked like a stuffed-animal unicorn with an exposed skull. He also sometimes dresses as the Swedish Chef.

“I’m a native-born Arizonan. I was born in eight and a half feet of snow, and I love doing these horror cos-plays!” said Not Bob.

This was the final event for Valley cosplayer Cholo Myers, who be-came a fixture of the horror cosplay community over the past four to five years.

Head to www.oodhamnews.org to listen to the O’odham Action News Podcast episode that recently featured an interview with the Woodenhead Collective crew.



Spike the Warlord stops by for a scare at Millie's Creations.



Martha Ludlow-Martinez and family pose for a photo with an alien (middle left) at The Day the Rez Stood Still: The 4th Kind.



A cosplayer is attacked by a face-hugger.

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SRPMIC FALL FESTIVAL MEETS SALT RIVER SCHOOLS SPOOKTACULAR FOR ONE EPIC NIGHT OF GHOULS, GOBLINS AND FAMILY FUN!

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5:30 PM - 9:00 PM
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DJ REFLEKSHIN

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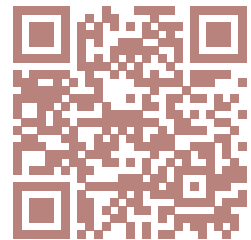
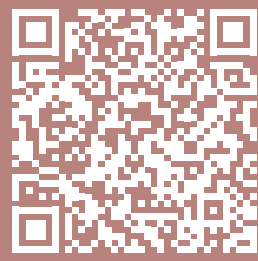
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MISS INDIAN ARIZONA SIALIK KING'S YOUTH SHOWCASE

BY ZOE HERNANDEZ
O'odham Action News
zoe.hernandez@srpmic-nsn.gov

Scan here to listen to OAN's podcast with Miss Sialik King!



Want to see more photos? Scan here to visit our website!

COMMUNITY WISHES FAREWELL TO MISS INDIAN ARIZONA

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE
O'odham Action News
juan.ysaguirre@srpmic-nsn.gov

Festive balloons and golden stars, along with red, white and yellow ribbons and hearty smiles, filled the Salt River Community Building on Sept. 20.

Roughly one year ago, SRPMIC member and Arizona State University student Sialik King was crowned the 2025-2026 Miss Indian Arizona. Now, as she prepares to hand the crown to the next Queen of Indigenous Arizona, King was celebrated and showered with well-wishes and support during her Farewell Community Celebration.

The event began at 5 p.m. with the *cu:dk/chiyer*. Similarly, royalty queens from across Indian Country visited with King as well as many of the guests and attendees. Songs, dances and laughter filled the building as King's parents, Kyland King and Cynde Claw King, ensured the night's meal and other matters ran smoothly.

The festivities continued throughout the night. King was joined by many former royalty members for the O'odham Giveaway Dance. During the dance, most people had their eyes on the Halloween arts and crafts decoration King had in her possession. When it was time for people to claim the prize, King, barefoot and all, playfully scurried a few laps around the singing circle before officially handing out the gift prize.

When it was time to say a few words, King, as she always does, spoke from the heart.

"It's been an amazing year. It feels like it was

just yesterday [when I was crowned]," shared King during her speech. "When I was younger, I never thought in a million years that I would run for the Miss Indian Arizona title. As I reflect on the past year, I think about all the things I learned—not only about myself, but about our beautiful state and all the strong people who live in it."

During her speech, King reiterated the importance of community, including the togetherness she feels with the 22 tribes in Arizona. King also shared that she relied on her "sash sisters" and continues to remain close with them as her reign as Miss Indian Arizona nears its completion.

"We are more than our smiles and our crowns," said King during her speech. "We are ambassadors and representations of our homes and people."

Ms. and Mr. Indigenous Arizona State University Candice Joe and Zach Thomas, Miss Gila River Eliana Rhodes, and Miss San Carlos Apache Kylie Kenton were some of the royalty members attending King's celebration.

King expressed her gratitude to all the mentors who have helped her along her journey thus far, including those in the Community who helped her prepare her pageant career when she ran for Jr. Miss Salt River a decade ago.

As her speech neared its conclusion, King saved her deepest appreciation for her parents. "Without them and their unwavering support in everything I do, I wouldn't be the person I am today. This title is as much theirs as it is mine," she said.



To perfectly cap off her reign as the 64th Miss Indian Arizona, King sang the traditional song "Something Rising from the Center of the Earth."

"It's only right that I end here today with the same song that has carried me for 10 years across three different crowns," she said.

King invited people to join in and began singing the song by herself while at the lectern. Moments later, nearly everyone inside the Community Building joined King in singing.

Later in the celebration and before guests packed the dance floor to strut their stuff to the tunes of Molina Music, King was showered with gifts and well-wishes from the Miss Indian Arizona Committee.

Though emotions ran high during the farewell celebration, the tears that fell Sunday night were of the joyful and celebratory kind. King's photo-ready smile was well on display all evening as she was showered with love and support as she embarks on the next chapter of her journey.

It truly was a celebration fit for a Queen.



Continued from cover

Travis Cuch: A Hero in the Hallway

“All of a sudden, I heard on my radio system, ‘Nurse. Security. Nurse. Security.’ That perked my ears up a bit,” he said. “Then I saw a kid run out [of the classroom]. I told myself, ‘I know she’s probably running to something.’ Then I saw a second student run out. I knew the student, so I yelled out to her, ‘Hey, what’s going on?’”

The second student said their classmate was having a seizure. Cuch, with no hesitation, tossed his duster to the side and ran over to help. He approached the male student, who was suffering a seizure and foaming from the mouth.

When a person experiences a seizure, sometimes they might begin foaming at the mouth. This is due to electrical activity in the brain stimulating the salivary glands, which produces more spit than usual, according to medical experts. The excess saliva mixes with the air as the body convulses and the person begins breathing rapidly.

Cuch knelt next to the student to help.

“I went down to my knees and grabbed him by the head,” he said. “I grabbed his head so he wouldn’t hit it on anything. Then, I saw his eyes and rolled him off to the side because he was foaming at the mouth a little bit.”

He continued, “I was checking his eyes, trying to make sure he’s getting all that stuff out of his system. He was biting his tongue a bit too; there was blood. Maybe 10 seconds later, the nurse came in and I explained to her what happened to him.”

Once the nurse arrived, Cuch remained nearby to assist.

“Then the student, he jumped up like he was trying to come out of it,” Cuch said. “But he wasn’t coherent or able to clearly listen to us. So, I jumped back down and held his head and made sure he didn’t bang his head on anything or fall back down.”

Moments later, campus security arrived to help.

Thankfully, the student is okay and is receiving treatment.

When a person experiences a seizure, it’s important for those nearby to remain calm, protect the person’s head, clear the area and turn them on their side. These crucial and lifesaving steps were correctly followed by Cuch thanks to some hometown training he’s had for quite some time now.

“I’ve been certified in CPR since I was a teenager, thanks to the Salt River Explorers. I’ve always been that person at the right time to help somebody out when they need it. Like for car crashes or middle-of-nowhere accidents, I was somehow always there to help,” he said.

The Salt River Explorers, established in 1995, was the first police Explorer post in Indian Country law enforcement. The program trains youth ages 14 to 21 by providing safety and security programs and classes to help them grow their careers. In some cases, the Salt River Explorers go on ride-along trips with police to experience a day in the life of a police officer, in addition to helping with Community events such as the Thanksgiving Dinner, Safety Day, Earth Day and more.

“I just remembered my training,” said Cuch. “It was nothing new to me. It was like, [during that moment] all my training just took over.”

For Cuch, helping others is simply part of his motto he tries to live his life by every day. “I was just doing my job, making sure the staff and kids are safe and taken care of. Everybody needs help. So, help out when you can; it doesn’t hurt.”





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ACTION NEWS

Learning the orthographies of the O'odham and Piipaash

O'odham		Piipaash	
Family		Family	
Og	Father	Nyko	Father (male)
Je'e	Mother		
Vosk	Paternal Grandfather	N'ay	Father (female)
Ka:k	Paternal Grandmother	Nthay	Mother
Ba:b	Maternal Grandfather	Npaw	Paternal Grandfather
Hu'ul	Maternal Grandmother	Nmawsh	Paternal Grandmother
		Nkowsh	Maternal Grandfather
		Nkyewsh	Maternal Grandmother

Trick-or-Treat Community Address Sign Up List



Join our list of community houses that would like to participate in trick-or-treating this year!

DEADLINE TO SIGN UP:
October 23, 2026

Submit your address:
srpmic-nsn.gov/trick-or-treat



Find the final list after October 23 through Community Relations or on the SRPMIC website.

Questions? Contact the Community Relations Office at 480-362-7740

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Youth Art Shines at Salt River Arts Festival

BY DALTON WALKER
O'odham Action News
dalton.walker@srpmic-nsn.gov

For several hours on a recent weekend, the tourism office of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community turned into a youth art gallery full of vibrant paintings, striking photos and stylish clothing.

The gallery showcasing Akimel O'odham, Xalychidom Piipaash and other Native creatives was part of the six-hour Salt River Arts Festival that mostly took place outside the Discover Salt River office at The Pavilions at Talking Stick on Saturday, Sept. 26.

The free public event also featured more than 20 art vendors, live music by DJ Reflekshin and DJ Psuede, and a delicious food fundraising sale by Bird Singing & Dancing by the River. Discover Salt River also hosted a Color Me Mine station where the first 100 people painted a cactus piece.

Artwork by the Salt River Elementary School Eagles Club, SRPMIC Youth Services and the Salt River Boys & Girls Club was highlighted in the youth art gallery.

Some of the Community-member artists featured include Travis Spex, Summer Flower Jones, Nicole Carlos, Matthew Thomas Goodwin and Gavin Selestewa.

The Salt River Children's Foundation hosted a paint-by-numbers fundraiser station.

For event highlights, be sure to check the Salt River Arts Festival Instagram page at [Instagram.com/saltriverartsfest](https://www.instagram.com/saltriverartsfest).



Youth art was on display at the Salt River Arts Festival on Sept. 26. Dozens of work, most by young Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community members, were part of a youth art gallery as part of the festival.



A sunny September day at the Salt River Arts Festival outside the Discover Salt River office at The Pavilions at Talking Stick.



Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community artist Isaac Lopez works on a piece at his booth. Lopez was one of more than a dozen artists to participate in the Salt River Arts Festival on Sept. 26.



Art work on display by SRPMIC artist Matt Goodwin. Goodwin's work was part of the youth art gallery at the Salt River Arts Festival.

Discover Salt River Celebrates Sovereign Storytelling and Industry Honors at 2026 Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism

SUBMITTED BY DISCOVER SALT RIVER

The Discover Salt River team proudly represented the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community at the annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism, held in Tucson from Aug. 12 to 14.

Discover Salt River debuted a refreshed informational booth designed to showcase the Community's unique heritage, destination amenities and visitor resources. The vibrant setup drew enthusiastic engagement from conference attendees and received high praise from leadership at the Arizona Office of Tourism throughout the three-day event.

Tourism Manager Maleena Deer served as a panelist for the breakout session "Designing Tourism With Your Community, Not Around It." Facilitated by Colleen Floyd (Sr. Associate Principal, Coraggio Group), the panel brought together regional leaders, including Mayor Mila Besich (Town of Superior), Jenny Niemann (deputy sustainability director, City of Flagstaff) and Tahnee Robertson (director, Southwest Decision Resources) to discuss how destinations can co-create tourism alongside local voices. During the session, Deer emphasized the importance of sovereign storytelling, elevating community pride and fostering authentic, inclusive travel experiences built from the inside out.

The conference concluded with a landmark achievement for the Community. Discover Salt River was presented with the prestigious Best Marketing Initiative Award for Maricopa and Pinal counties, honoring the success of the Salt River Hospitality Campaign. The initiative was recognized for establishing a benchmark in

sovereign storytelling including elements such as Discover Salt River's first Official Visitor Guide, the interactive Salt River Art Trail and the developing Cultural Awareness Program.

Salt River continues to be an award-winning destination, and each team member played a crucial role in our collective success. From frontline communication with visitors to advertising buys across the nation, social media promotion, collaborative partnerships with Talking Stick Entertainment District business partners and everything in between, the team looks forward to continued progress heading into the next fiscal year.



Discover Salt River was presented with the prestigious Best Marketing Initiative Award for Maricopa and Pinal counties.



The Discover Salt River team poses for a picture at the 2026 Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Check out more from Discover Salt River below!

Discover Salt River's Hospitality Video:



Link to Social Media feature for the booth:



SALT RIVER CHURCH LISTINGS

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1452 E. Oak St. Mesa, AZ 85203
Pastor Merrill Jones
(480) 234-6091
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Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.
Sun. Night Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Wed. Devotion Night 6:30 p.m.
SOAR Group 2nd & 4th Friday, 7 p.m.
Mon. night Prayer Meeting, 6 p.m.
Singspiration, last Sundays at 6 p.m.

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1512 E. McDowell Rd. Mesa, AZ 85203
Pastor Neil Price
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1342 E. Oak Mesa, AZ 85203
Pastor Annette Lewis
annette.f.lewis@gmail.com
(480) 404-3284
SERVICES: Sunday Services 10 a.m., Communion First Sundays at 10 a.m.
Birthday Sunday Potluck- Last Sunday of the Month, after services.
Youth Devotion/Music (bring your instruments!) last 2 Saturdays of the month at 4 p.m.

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(480) 947-1084
SERVICES: Sunday service begins at 10 a.m.

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12207 E. Indian School Rd. Scottsdale, AZ 85256
Pastor Marty Thomas
(480) 874-3016/ Home: (480) 990-7450
SERVICES: Sunday service 11 a.m.
Lord's Supper every first Sunday of the month (potluck after)

SALT RIVER ASSEMBLY OF GOD
10657 E. Virginia Ave. Scottsdale, AZ 85256
Rev. WinterElk Valencia
(480) 947-5278
saltriveragchurh.com
SERVICES: Sunday Morning Prayer 10 a.m., Worship 11 a.m., Thursday Bible Study 6pm

SALT RIVER CHURCH OF CHRIST
430 N. Dobson Rd. Suite 105 Mesa, AZ 85201
(720) 626-2171, Josh Austin
SaltRiverChurchofChrist.com
SERVICES: Bible Class 9:30 a.m. -10:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Bible Class 6 p.m., Bible Study Wednesdays 7 p.m.
Local transportation available, please call phone number above

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P.O. Box 10125
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SERVICES: Sunday Service, 1 p.m., Communion first Sunday of the month

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Apostle Edward Chance
apostleaac@gmail.com
(480) 516-6509
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Senior Pastor Danny Cruz
480-427-4678
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VICTORY OUTREACH CHURCH MESA
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Senior Pastor Danny Cruz
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MAIN LINE (480) 362-7750
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NOTICE REGARDING AI FLYERS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

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O'ODHAM ACTION NEWS DEADLINES	
ISSUE	DEADLINE AT NOON
NOVEMBER 5	OCTOBER 16
NOVEMBER 19	NOVEMBER 6
DECEMBER 3	NOVEMBER 20
DECEMBER 17	DECEMBER 4
SEND INFORMATION TO O'ODHAM ACTION NEWS at oan@srpmic-nsn.gov	
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BOARD VACANCIES

S'he:pijig Maşad "Cold Month" / Xly'a Shaxuk "Tenth Moon"

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

2026 OCTOBER OPENINGS

APPLICATION DEADLINE

October 31, 2026

SCAN ME!



<https://tinyurl.com/OCT2026BV>

LEGAL NOTICES

JUVENILE COURT
JURISDICTION: SALT RIVER PIMA MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY COURT
ADDRESS: 10040 EAST OSBORN RD. SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85256
CONTACT: (480) 362-6315
ALL JUVENILE COURT CASES REPORT TO COURTROOM #3 ON THE 1ST FLOOR.
FAILURE TO APPEAR CAN AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS

Andrews, Teresa – Permanency Hearing Case: JV-26-0041 Court Date: December 14, 2026 at 9 a.m.

Fair, Edward Glen – Adjudication Hearing; Mother: Adriana Kilgore (DOB 09/02/1995) Minor: E.A.B (DOB: 07/10/2016) Case: JV-26-0008, Court Date: November 2, 2026 at 10 a.m.

Fair, Edward Glen – Adjudication Hearing Mother: Adriana Kilgore (DOB 09/02/1995) Minor: P.B (DOB: 10/31/2018) Case: JV-26-0009, Court Date: November 2, 2026 at 10 a.m.

Maynard, Calvin/Maynard, Teresa - Truancy Review Payment Hearing Case: JV-26-0193/0194 Court Date: November 12, 2026 at 3 PM

Miguel, Cory Curtis - Mother: Jaelynn Bejarano (DOB: 12/17/1994) Children: K.J.M. (DOB: 05/26/2012); K.J.M. (DOB: 07/20/2014); J.C.M. (DOB: 02/29/2016); J.M. (DOB: 03/23/2019); C.M. (DOB: 11/01/2020) Adjudication Hearing Case: JV-26-0113/0114/0115/0116/0117 Court Date: November 3, 2026, at 1:30 PM

Reed, Kevin Dale - Mother: Jessica Schurz (DOB: 09/19/1994) Children: D.D.S. (DOB: 06/04/2023); C.R.C.S. (DOB: 06/04/2023) Review Hearing Case: JV-25-0198/0199 Court Date: December 3, 2026, at 10 AM

Sharp, Jason Lawrence - Adjudication Hearing Case: JV-26-0229 Court Date: November 10, 2026 at 9 a.m.

Weatherspoon, Ruben - Mother: Anya Ticer (DOB: 02/22/1996) Child: N.M.W. (DOB: 06/05/2018)

Initial Guardianship Hearing Case,: J-22-0126 Court Date: November 16, 2026 at 9 a.m.

CIVIL COURT
JURISDICTION: SALT RIVER PIMA MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY COURT
ADDRESS: 10040 EAST OSBORN RD. SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85256
CONTACT: (480) 362-6315
CIVIL COURT CASES REPORT TO COURTROOM #1/ #2 ON THE 1ST FLOOR.
FAILURE TO APPEAR CAN AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS

Andrews, Dracy Adjudication Hearing Case: JV-26-0039 Court Date: November 5, 2026 at 1:30 p.m.

Burke, Daniel - Order of Protection Hearing Case: CV-26-6536 Court Date: November 9, 2026 at 11:30 AM

Gonzales, Vanessa Rene - Default Judgement Hearing Case: CV-26-4233 Court Date: November 19, 2026 at 10 AM

Harrison, Aliyah Aryanna - Entry of Default Judgement/ Order to Show Cause Hearings Case: CV-26-4221 Court Date: November 19, 2026 at 9:30 AM

Johnson, Brandi Morningstar - Entry of Default Judgement Case: CV-26-4231 Court Date: November 19, 2026 at 9 AM

Parker, Damien - Evidentiary Hearing Case: CV-26-4284 Court Date: November 9, 2026 at 9:30 AM

Rivera, Andrew Michael - Evidentiary Guardianship Hearing Case: CV-26-5533 Court Date: November 18, 2026 at 10 AM

Rivera, Andrew Michael - Evidentiary Guardianship Hearing Case: CV-26-5533 Court Date: November 18, 2026 at 10 AM

Sharp, Jason Lawrence - Adjudication Hearing Case: JV-26-0229 Court Date: November 10, 2026 at 9 a.m.

Stevens, Lisa Faylene - Status Hearing Case: C-12-0066 Court Date: November 10, 2026 at 10 AM

DEFAULT NOTICES

GONZALES, VANESSA
CV-26-4233
COUNTRY CLUB CARS V. VANESSA GONZALES
To: Vanessa Gonzales, RESPONDENT

1. A Complaint / Petition has been filed against you in this Court and your immediate attention to this fact is urgent if you do not want judgment entered against you.
2. The Court record reflects that you have failed to respond to defend by filing an answer, motion to dismiss, request for extension of time or other responsive pleading and you have failed to attend hearings at the Court called for this matter.
3. If you do not defend against this suit within Thirty (30) days from the date the Process Server hands you this or you are served with it otherwise as permitted under the Community Code, the Court may enter default judgment against you.
4. A default judgment may have serious, adverse, and irreversible consequences against you.
5. If you want to defend against the claim and avoid default judgment entered against you, you must file a written answer, motion to dismiss or other responsive pleading within thirty (30) days from when you are served with this Notice. The Court will not extend time for your response and you must make your response in writing, no oral responses will be accepted
6. If you do nothing, the Court may give Judgment for what the Complaint demands. (Section 5-16.1, Judgment by Default) Call 480-362-6315 for copy of documents.

DATED this 14th of August, 2026.

CLERK OF THE SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY TRIBAL COURT

HARRISON, ALIYAH ARYANNA
CV-26-4221
COUNTRY CLUB CARS V. ALIYAH ARYANNA HARRISON

To: Aliyah Aryanna Harrison, RESPONDENT

1. A Complaint / Petition has been filed against you in this Court and your immediate attention to this fact is urgent if you do not want judgment entered against you.
2. The Court record reflects that you have failed to respond to defend by filing an answer, motion to dismiss, request for extension of time or other responsive pleading and you have failed to attend hearings at the Court called for this matter.
3. If you do not defend against this suit within Thirty (30) days from the date the Process Server hands you this or you are served with it otherwise as permitted under the Community Code, the Court may enter default judgment against you.
4. A default judgment may have serious, adverse, and irreversible consequences against you.
5. If you want to defend against the claim and avoid default judgment entered against you, you must file a written answer, motion to dismiss or other responsive pleading within thirty (30) days from when you are served with this Notice. The Court will not extend time for your response and you must make your response in writing, no oral responses will be accepted
6. If you do nothing, the Court may give Judgment for what the Complaint demands. (Section 5-16.1, Judgment by Default).

DATED this 8th of September, 2026.

CLERK OF THE SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY TRIBAL COURT

HARRISON, ALIYAH ARYANNA
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
CV-26-4221
COUNTRY CLUB CARS V. ALIYAH ARYANNA HARRISON

To: Aliyah A. Harrison, Respondent

YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED to appear before the above-entitled court on the 19th day of November 2026 at 9:30am in Court Room #1, and show cause why you should not be held in contempt for failing to appear for a hearing on September 8, 2026 after being duly noticed.

FAILURE TO APPEAR will result in a Bench Warrant issued for your arrest for Contempt of Court from (§6-41) of the Code or Ordinances.

ORDERED: October 1, 2026.

JUDGE ARISTINA SANCHEZ, SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY COURT

JOHNSON, BRANDI MORNINGSTAR
CV-26-4231
COUNTRY CLUB CARS V. BRANDI MORNINGSTAR JOHNSON

To: Brandi Morningstar Johnson, RESPONDENT

1. A Complaint / Petition has been filed against you in this Court and your immediate attention to this fact is urgent if you do not want judgment entered against you.
2. The Court record reflects that you have failed to respond to defend by filing an answer, motion to dismiss, request for extension of time or other responsive pleading and you have failed to attend hearings at the Court called for this matter.
3. If you do not defend against this suit within Thirty (30) days from the date the Process Server hands you this or you are served with it otherwise as permitted under the Community Code, the Court may enter default judgment against you.
4. A default judgment may have serious, adverse, and irreversible consequences against you.
5. If you want to defend against the claim and avoid default judgment entered against you, you must file a written answer, motion to dismiss or other responsive pleading within thirty (30) days from when you are served with this Notice. The Court will not extend time for your response and you must make your response in writing, no oral responses will be accepted
6. If you do nothing, the Court may give Judgment for what the Complaint demands. (Section 5-16.1, Judgment by Default).

DATED this 8th of September, 2026.

CLERK OF THE SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY TRIBAL COURT

LEWIS, MAXINA
CV-26-2425
NOTICE OF DEFAULT JUDGMENT:

Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Court, State of Arizona, Maricopa County original jurisdiction court case number CV-26-2425

Notice of Default Judgment is hereby given ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that default judgment against Respondent, Lewis, Maxina is hereby ENTERED. It is further, ORDERED AND ADJUDGED, that Respondent, Lewis, Maxina shall pay \$1,294.79 to Petitioner, Country Club Cars. Payment shall be made to Petitioner within thirty (30) days of this Order. This order is final and shall be served on Respondent in accordance to Rule 5-20(c).

SMITH, KARILYN D.
CV-26-4566
DIANE NOLINE V. KARILYN D. SMITH

To: Karilyn D. Smith, RESPONDENT

1. A Complaint / Petition has been filed against you in this Court and your immediate attention to this fact is urgent if you do not want judgment entered against you.
2. The Court record reflects that you have failed to respond to defend by filing an answer, motion to dismiss, request for extension of time or other responsive pleading and you have failed to attend hearings at the Court called for this matter.
3. If you do not defend against this suit within Thirty (30) days from the date the Process Server hands you this or you are served with it otherwise as permitted under the Community Code, the Court may enter default judgment against you.
4. A default judgment may have serious, adverse, and irreversible consequences against you.
5. If you want to defend against the claim and avoid default judgment entered against you, you must file a written answer, motion to dismiss or other responsive pleading within thirty (30) days from when you are served with this Notice. The Court will not extend time for your response and you must make your response in writing, no oral responses will be accepted
6. If you do nothing, the Court may give Judgment for what the Complaint demands. (Section 5-16.1, Judgment by Default) Call 480-362-6315 for copy of documents.

DATED this 22nd of September, 2026.

CLERK OF THE SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY TRIBAL COURT



SALT RIVER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
HOLIDAY TRASH & RECYCLE
COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Residential containers **WILL BE SERVICED** as regularly scheduled on these holidays:

✔ New Year’s Day

✔ MLK Day

✔ President’s Day

✔ Good Friday

✔ Memorial Day

✔ SRPMIC Day

✔ Juneteenth

✔ Independence Day

✔ Labor Day

✔ Native American Recognition Day

✔ Veteran’s Day

*and any other council proclamations that may occur

The SR Public Works Department will be **closed** on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

Please contact PW Customer Service for their schedules.

📞 480-362-5600 ✉ PWCustomerService@srpmic-nsn.gov

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Your vote helps shape decisions that impact:

- Education
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Tribal and local partnerships
- Federal and state policies affecting Native communities

Every election—primary and general—plays a role in determining leadership and priorities.

State/Federal Elections

Stand Up. Stand Tall. Vote.

Voting is one of the most powerful ways to make your voice heard — locally, statewide, and nationally.

There are eight propositions on most Arizona ballots. Read more about each on SaltRiverVotes.com, including information about Proposition 144, which the SRPMIC tribal government opposes. The website also has information on candidates.

Important Election Dates

- Oct. 23: Last day to request a ballot by mail
- Oct. 27: Last day to mail back your ballot
- Nov. 3: Election Day

Phone: (480) 362-5520 | Email: vote@srpmic-nsn.gov

SRPMIC Elections

O’odham Action News will publish primary election results and re-publish candidate statements for those moving on to the general election in our November 5 publication.

Important Election Dates

- Oct. 20: Primary Election
- Oct. 26: General Election President Forum
- Oct. 29: Deadline for Absentee Ballot Requests (General Election)
- Nov. 12: Deadline to Request Home Voting (General Election)
- Nov. 17: General Election

For election information or to request an absentee ballot, home voting, or general election information visit <https://srpmic-nsn.gov/government/election/#voter> or contact Erica Harvier or Ardell Moore.

Phone: (480) 362-7466 or (480) 362-7465
Email: SaltRiverElections@srpmic-nsn.gov

Salt River Public Works Department
Memorial Services & Cemeteries

"Providing a hospitable place to honor loved ones at the end of life's journey."

MAIN OFFICE LOCATED AT
Memorial Hall
9849 East Earll Drive
Scottsdale, AZ 85256
Monday-Friday
8 AM- 5 PM

CONTRACTED MORTUARIES
Bunker Family Funerals & Cremation
(480) 964-8686

Whitney & Murphy Funeral Home
(602) 840-5600

For Any Questions Call: (480) 278-7050

PUBLIC WORKS NOTICE

SRPMIC Council has approved the nightly closures of the Salt River and Lehi Cemeteries due to continued vandalism. The Salt River and Lehi Cemeteries will be closed from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m.

If you have any questions, please contact Memorial Services at (480) 278-7050

All Tribal Communities Celebrated at NARD

Continued from cover

Harkins Theatres popcorn truck with free popcorn. There was also a prickly pear lemonade and mesquite pound cake giveaway from The Ranch Mobile Eatery, which hails from Sacaton in the Gila River Indian Community.

If people still were hungry after all that, the Round House had a special menu with traditional foods for \$10. After an afternoon food coma, there surely must have been more room for a free Salt River Rez Dog in the evening. This special hot dog came with red chili, beans, cheese and plenty of other toppings.

Vendor and SRPMIC department booths were on-site during the evening. The night at Salt River, which

began with the Rice Intermediate School Apache Culture Club's Apache Crown Dancers, was a cultural experience to talk about for days.

But NARD wasn't just about other cultures. The Young River People's Council O'odham & Piipaash dancers had the Community joining hand in hand by the time they were finished. The Pascua Yaqui Deer Dancers were next, and they politely asked everyone in the courtyard not to record them, leaving their visit to the Community in memories. After a promo giveaway, the Two Rivers waila band rounded out the celebration with a familiar and familial sound.



The Sir Harrison Band, led by Diné guitarist Harrison Begay, opened the day's NARD festivities with energetic blues music.



Raymond Lewis, Maxon Mendoza and Winston Fulwider gather outside of the Harkins Popcorn truck and enjoy the NARD celebration at Two Waters.



Visitors chowing down on free popcorn from Harkins. Yum!



The Red Bull car stopped by to give away one can of Red Bull per person.



Left: Cemait and beans were part of the traditional food meal available to the Community in the Round House Cafe during NARD.

Below: The Young River People's Council O'odham & Piipaash dancers got the Community involved during their NARD dance.



The Ranch Mobile Eatery from Sacaton gave away free prickly pear lemonade and mesquite pound cake during NARD.

Ske:g Himdag Ki: Fun Fair!

BY ZOE HERNANDEZ

O'odham Action News

zoe.hernandez@srpmic-nsn.gov

On a warm September evening, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community families gathered at the Ske:g Himdag Ki: for the annual Fun Fair.

Youth Services and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Salt River O'odham & Piipaash hosted this year's Fun Fair on Sept. 18.

Community departments showcased their services and shared information as well as goodies. There were also fun outdoor games, activities, food and

even two water slides. Sekik ha'hajuñ (happy relatives) walked up and down the aisles of the booths. The Salt River Fire Department's booth was a big hit for families, as Deputy Fire Chief for Operations Michael Mink and others handed out their signature yellow fire hats.

The *O'odham Action News* team participated in this year's Fun Fair. The team shared the most current issue of the newspaper and fun information about the process of producing the paper. OAN also shared a call for artist submissions for an upcoming special edition that will highlight Community members' artwork. For more information about getting your

work published in OAN, visit <https://tinyurl.com/OANArtMag>.

The evening ended with a dance party and a traditional O'odham giveaway. During the dance party, youth gathered and jumped side to side to familiar tunes while holding light sticks. Following the dance party, young ladies lined up with giveaway items in hand. Adults and kids rushed to grab an arm for things such as El Pato foods and Blue Bird Flour. There was not a dull moment at the 2026 Ske:g Himdag Ki: Fun Fair.



The O'odham dance giveaway is an exciting moment at any event.



The event offered a safe and fun opportunity to make a splash!



If the water slide's down, then electric slide!



There was something for everyone at the dance giveaway.

Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort Once Again Make History

The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's gaming enterprises, Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort, made history when they were announced as the first-ever Diamond Presenting Sponsor for the Phoenix Indian Center's annual Silver and Turquoise Ball.

BY JUAN YSAGUIRRE

O'odham Action News

juan.ysaguirre@srpmic-nsn.gov

Once again, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community continues to make history on the local and state levels.

This year's annual Silver & Turquoise Ball will be held on Oct. 17 at the Talking Stick Resort. This year's theme, "Relatives Rooted in Community," celebrates the togetherness, relationships, traditions and culture that Indigenous people share with each other.

In the ball's 43-year history, there has never been a Diamond Presenting Sponsor.

That streak ended on Aug. 27, when the Phoenix Indian Center announced Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort as the Diamond Presenting Sponsor of the 43rd Annual Silver & Turquoise Ball.

With only a handful of days remaining until the big day, Phoenix Indian Center CEO Jolyana Begay-Krupa talked with *O'odham Action News* and shared the impact of the gaming enterprise being the first-ever \$100,000 Diamond Presenting Sponsor.

"It's definitely a record," began Begay-Krupa. "We've reached \$75,000 before, which is still a huge amount, but this is a first. We're deeply grateful for their generosity. The event itself is our signature event; this is a good thing for the Phoenix Indian Center."

The Phoenix Indian Center provides workforce-development opportunities including résumé assistance,

prevention services, youth services and community engagements, as well as cultural enrichment classes and events throughout the year. This year's record-setting sponsorship by the gaming enterprise will ensure that these types of classes, programs and opportunities will continue to be available for Indigenous people.

Poetically enough, the theme of this year's Silver & Turquoise Ball being "Relatives Rooted in Community" proved to have an added layer of meaning for Begay-Krupa and Patricia Tate, the CEO of Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort.

"She's an amazing person," said Begay-Krupa about Tate. "Back in March or so this year, the *Phoenix Business Journal* held their Outstanding Women in Business Awards. Patricia was a recipient and so was I. That was really neat. We got to know each other, and we met a number of women that were recognized. She was chief financial officer at the time, and then I heard she is now recognized as CEO. That was so amazing," Begay-Krupa added.

Additionally, this year's Silver & Turquoise Ball will feature a friend of the SRPMIC, chef Pyet DeSpain. She was recently announced as the event's chef. Earlier this year, DeSpain spent a week in the Community as part of her cookbook promotional tour.

3 Takeaways:

- The Phoenix Indian Center announced Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort as the first Diamond Presenting Sponsor of the annual Silver & Turquoise Ball.
- In the 43-year history of the event, there has never been a Diamond Presenting Sponsor.
- This year's ball will be held on Saturday, Oct. 17, at the Talking Stick Resort.

With only days remaining until the event, this year's Silver & Turquoise Ball will undoubtedly continue to connect and support relatives while celebrating the traditions, cultures and songs that make being Indigenous so wonderful.

In a few days, Talking Stick Resort will become the elegant Silver & Turquoise Ball. Photo by Zoe Hernandez.



A Healthy Balance

BY DALTON WALKER

O’odham Action News
dalton.walker@srpmic-nsn.gov

Every meal tells a story.

For chef Shannon Reina, a favorite memory is being at her grandparents’ house as a kid, smelling the beans cooking and watching her grandmother at the table, chopping something.

“Food has always had a special place in my heart, because that’s what ties me to my family,” she said.

For chef Sandra Miller, preparing food is her ancestors talking to her.

“Cooking is a portal to my mother and grandmother,” she said. “I spent so much time in the kitchen because I didn’t want to be away from them.”

For health educator Thosh Collins, it’s his relationship to the land. Food can be hunted, foraged and grown.

“I try to partake in all those, building my personal connection to our food-ways,” he said.

Reina, Miller and Collins shared stories of food and how it shaped their way of life as part of a “Food, Culture and Identity” panel in late September.

The panel, held on Sept. 29 at the Council Chambers, wrapped up the 2026 Salt River Summer Speaker Series. Reina and Collins are from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and Miller is from the Tohono O’odham Nation. Reina is a longtime foodservice manager at Salt River Schools and Collins is a health educator, actor and author. Miller’s N8TV KTCN catered the event and provided a meal, while Reina provided food samples.

SRPMIC Assistant Community Manager Lena Jackson-Eckert has hosted two other Speaker Series panels this summer, as well as the series last summer.

The panel discussion lasted nearly 90 minutes and included questions from the audience.

3 Takeaways:

- The final 2026 Salt River Summer Speaker Series panel took place in September.
- The conversation featured Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community members Shannon Reina and Thosh Collins. Tohono O’odham chef Sandra Miller also joined the panel, hosted by Assistant Community Manager Lena Jackson-Eckert.
- Chef Miller’s N8TV KTCN catered the event and chef Reina provided food samples.

Passion was felt in each panel member’s voice.

Miller stressed the importance of increasing your food knowledge.

“Events like this give me hope. Cooking demonstrations, ... more [people] are asking for those things,” she said.

Cooking led Reina to the school system. Each meal she helps prepare for students is another opportunity to share her knowledge.

“The school nutrition program became my passion, my way to give back to the Community,” she said.

“I have an opportunity to teach these kids, cook for them, share with them, help them,” she added. A goal is to introduce traditional foods a little at a time. “I really want to see a healthier Community overall, and the work I’m doing is a start of that. I hope I’m planting the seeds for our young ones.”

Collins gave Reina a shout-out. He recalled one school day picking up his young daughter early due to an illness,

and she wanted to take home her lunch. He joked that if she wasn’t going to eat it, he would.

He also echoed Reina about slowly introducing traditional foods and finding ways to incorporate them into favorite meals.

“Mix up foods we have here with what you get at the grocery store,” he said. “We can vote with our dollar to decide.”

You can watch the speaker series on the SRPMIC Facebook page.



"Sister Hood Salad" from N8TV KTCN.



Left to right: Assistant Community Manager Lena Jackson-Eckert, Thosh Collins, Sandra Miller, and Shannon Reina.

September 29, 2026

Support Rolls in for Sen. Mark Kelly’s Make AI Work for Americans Act

PRESS RELEASE

Editor’s note: This press release was edited for length. See the full press release on Mark Kelly’s website.

Last week, Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) introduced the Make AI Work for Americans Act, landmark legislation designed to make sure companies benefiting the most from AI pay their fair share and invest in American workers. The bill establishes a dedicated federal trust fund to support American workers, job seekers and communities as the economy changes. Since its introduction, the bill has received broad support from Arizona and tribal leaders and organizations.

See what Native supporters of the Make AI Work for Americans Act are saying here:

“As AI evolves it will change how the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community does business, but it does not need to change how we work together as a community,” said Martin Harvier, President of the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community. Harvier continued, “Senator Kelly’s Make AI Work for Americans Act will ensure that that the next generation of employees have the training and education they need to serve in their communities, and it will provide individuals whose jobs were displaced due to changing technology with a strong foundation on which to rebuild. I look forward to working with Senator Kelly and his colleagues to strengthen Arizona’s economy and build a more resilient workforce in the years to come.”

“On behalf of the Gila River Indian Community, I support Senator Kelly’s leadership in introducing the Make AI Work for Americans Act. It is time for Congress to make sure that AI advancements are made in a thoughtful and deliberative manner that protects our people, our environment, and our workforce. It is critical that as Congress develops AI policies and laws that tribal governments are included and can ensure our communities and our workforce are both protected and can advance as AI evolves. Senator Kelly’s legislation would ensure that the American workforce, including the tribal workforce, has opportunities to grow with AI advancements through every stage of their career by providing training and workforce opportunities for apprentices, new and existing workers, and entrepreneurs. The legislation carefully balances the U.S. labor market needs to create employment pathways while ensuring consistent monitoring of AI advancements to ensure that as AI evolves it isn’t just big companies who benefit. I applaud Senator Kelly’s strategic approach to ensuring workforce protections at a time when AI is evolving at a rapid pace. The Community looks forward to working with Senator Kelly as he advances this bill in Congress,” said Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis, Gila River Indian Community.

“The Pascua Yaqui Tribe believes in creating opportunities that strengthen our people and communities for generations to come. Senator Kelly’s Make AI Work for Americans Act will give

Tribal small businesses owners more opportunities to grow and create jobs as our economy changes. I appreciate his commitment to making sure Tribal communities share in the economic opportunities created by AI,” said Julian Hernandez, chairman of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

“Navajo Technical University applauds Senator Kelly for introducing the Make AI Work for Americans Act. As the nation races to build an AI-ready workforce, Native communities must be included. This legislation’s focus on workforce training funding, rural broadband access, and higher education partnerships is the kind of investment that ensures AI’s benefits reach Indian Country. At NTU, we are preparing the next generation of Diné engineers, data scientists, and technologists. This Act would help us scale that work and make sure Native students have a seat at the table as this technology reshapes the workforce. We urge Congress to move swiftly to pass it,” said Elmer Guy, president, Navajo Technical University.

“Diné College views the AI Workforce for Americans Act as a significant opportunity to translate AI workforce policy into education, industry-recognized credentials, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunity for the Navajo Nation—while ensuring that Diné sovereignty, Indigenous knowledge, language, and Tribal data are protected,” said Arlando Teller, director of Legislative & Government Affairs, Diné College.

Halloween Safety Tips

SUBMITTED BY SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Halloween is on a Saturday night this year! Halloween is a favorite time of the year for youth who participate in going from home to home for treats. There are a lot of safety risks when galivanting in a neighborhood, like moving vehicles, children wearing masks, dark clothing, crossing streets and not looking both ways, or even going out without adult supervision. Here are safety tips from Families and Individuals Equitably Rooted in Collective Empowerment Advocates website:

Safety First: Tips for Trick-or-Treating

Halloween can be a magical time, but it also comes with safety risks. Here are some ways to keep your family safe:

1. Be Visible and Bright: Children are most at risk as pedestrians on Halloween. Use glow sticks, flashlights, and reflective tape on costumes or bags. Bright colors help drivers see little ghosts and goblins in the dark.

2. Stay Together: Children under 12 should always be accompanied by an adult. Older children should stick with friends, plan a route, and check in regularly. A buddy system can provide extra safety and peace of mind!

3. Choose Safe Costumes: Make sure costumes fit well to prevent tripping hazards. Consider face paint instead of masks to keep vision clear. Avoid sharp props and long trailing fabric. Look for flame-resistant materials when possible.

4. Be Street Smart: Always use crosswalks and well-lit streets. Remind children to look both ways and make eye contact with drivers before crossing. Stick to sidewalks when possible!

5. Fire Safety: Use battery-operated candles or glow sticks in pumpkins rather than open flames. Keep decorations away from heat sources and ensure smoke alarms are working. Teach children to respect fire hazards.

6. Food Safety: Check candy labels before letting children indulge, especially for children with allergies. Avoid home-made treats from strangers and provide a small meal before trick-or-treating to prevent overeating.

Halloween Safety and Cultural Awareness Tips for Families — FIERCE Advocates

After returning home, adults should check the candy to ensure it is intact and has not been compromised; discard any open candy or snack packages. Home-made treats are not advisable to consume, unless you personally know the baker. Read the label for allergens if a child has allergies.

Have fun but be safe. There are also several local venues who offer Halloween festivities, search online for them.

Another safety tip is to have your child vaccinated at least two weeks before Halloween. The recommended vaccinations are for flu and other respiratory virus illnesses that are known to be spread during the fall.

Lastly...tend to your child’s teeth. Teeth should be brushed after consuming sweets.

HAVE A SAFE HALLOWEEN!!



SALT RIVER MATERIALS GROUP

PRODUCES AND SUPPLIES THE KEY INGREDIENTS
NEEDED TO MAKE CONCRETE



11%
PORTLAND CEMENT OR
PORTLAND CEMENT + POZZOLAN



42%
AGGREGATES



30%
SAND



16%
WATER



1%
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FOR THE COMPLETE SRPMIC
CALENDAR,
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW:



ONGOING

- AAR AFTERNOONS**, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1-3 p.m., Ske:g Himdag Ki: Senior Room. Engaging games, crafts and events for community members ages 18-54 with intellectual, physical and emotional needs. Questions? SSDAdultAdaptiveRecreation@srpmic-nsn.gov
- DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP**, 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. in room 3104 (Cloud), 3rd floor of RPHC. This free, confidential, and safe group of individuals support one another by utilizing their collective experiences and learned wisdom. This gathering is for adults diagnosed with diabetes. For more information, contact (480) 362-3355.
- TAI CHI FOR SENIORS**, Tuesdays, 9-10 a.m., Ske:g Himdag Ki: Senior Room. This ancient Chinese martial art uses slow and continuous movements to improve the mind and body. For seniors 55+ and adults with adaptive needs.
- LOVE AND HARMONY COUPLES GROUP**, Tuesdays | 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM | Behavioral Health Services, River People Health Center. Ready to strengthen your relationship and build deeper connection? Join our Couples Group, based on Dr. John Gottman's The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work. Learn practical tools to: Improve communication; Resolve conflicts; Deepen intimacy; Navigate challenges around family, work, and more. Call (480) 362-5707 to learn more or sign up today.

- NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP**, First Wednesday of each month from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. at RPHC 3rd Floor, Room 3203. Contact (480) 278-7742 for more information.
- WELLBRIETY 12 STEP AND MEDICINE WHEEL**, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. at RPHC. Wellbriety is a Native American recovery fellowship that blends spiritual practice with the 12-Step program. Its approach to recovery focuses on healing and is rooted in the Teachings of the Medicine Wheel, the Cycle of Life, and the Four Laws of Change. Wellbriety emphasizes creating new thought patterns, attitudes, and feelings about sobriety based on traditional concepts and Native American teachings.
- TALKING CIRCLE FOLLOWING WELLBRIETY**, Wednesdays and Fridays 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Following the Wellbriety session, participants are invited to join the Talking Circle to share insights and experiences related to living in recovery and honoring traditional practices, including fellowship, community, and connection.
- CRAFT COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT AND FAMILY TRAINING**, Support group for families of loved ones battling substance abuse/addiction/dependence. Fridays 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at RPHC Room 3106 (3rd Floor) For More Information please contact Shea Hinton at (480) 362-2739.
- HELPING HANDS HALF OFF FOR SRPMIC MEMBERS**, Every Friday Community members get 50% off at Helping Hands. Open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., closed 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. for lunch at 10213 E. Osborn Rd. Call 480-362-5625 for more information.
- BEADING CIRCLE**, Wednesdays 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Salt River Tribal Library inside Ske:g Himdag Ki:. Open to enrolled SRPMIC members and Ske:g Himdag Ki: members. Call 480-362-6600 for more information.
- CREATIVE WRITING GROUP**, Every 1st Thursday of the Month, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at Lehi Community Building Room 109. This Group provides a creative environment to learn and explore prompt writing, literary discussion, and guest writers/authors. All

- genres and levels welcome. Open to adult Community Members and Ske:g Himdag Ki: members. For more information, call 480 362-6600.
- ELEVATING ELDERS**, Thursdays, 9-10 a.m., Ske:g Himdag Ki: Senior Room. Physical Fitness Specialist Nevelle Howard leads a fun, energizing class that boosts strength using body weight and light dumbbells. For seniors 55+ and adults with adaptive needs.
- YOGA FOR FALL PREVENTION**, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesdays, 9-10 a.m., Ske:g Himdag Ki: Senior Room. Standing or chair options available. Guided movements improve strength, balance and flexibility. For seniors 55+ and adults with adaptive needs.
- S'HE:PIJIG MAŞAD XLY'A SHAXUK OCTOBER**
- 16 S.O.B.E.R. FAMILY MEETING**, 6 p.m. at Salt River Church of Christ 430 N. Dobson Rd. Mesa, AZ 85201 This event will feature Salt River President Martin Harvier sharing his knowledge and support with the group. All are welcome to Support Our Brothers Entering Recovery, will include a raffle and pot luck following words from President Harvier.
- 17 VEHICLE AUCTION VIEWING DAY (1 OF 2)**, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Vehicle Storage Lot (by Dialysis center). Deadline for bids is Monday, October 26 at 5 p.m. All bids will be accepted starting 10/17 during business hours at the DOT Admin office (8:00 am - 5:00 pm). SRPMIC Tribal Members only. All adults entering the vehicle yard will need to have SRPMIC Tribal ID. All vehicles & equipment are sold as is. Must be 18+ years old to submit a bid, no exceptions. Questions? Please call 480-362-7315
- 17 CM DALLAS / CM SCABBY QUARTERLY LEHI DISTRICT MEETING**, 10:00 am at Evergreen Neighborhood Center, 12275 East Fairmount Avenue Scottsdale, AZ 85256. Agenda: Future of the SR Landfill, Environmental Programs & Resources, Community Member Comments. For the district

- meeting agenda, please visit the SRPMIC Council District Meeting information website: <https://tinyurl.com/SRPMICDMs>. SRPMIC Council Secretaries Office: (480) 362-7469
- 19 CM FULWILDER DISTRICT D MEETING**, 6:00 pm at ALA Lecture Hall 4827 North Country Club Drive Scottsdale, AZ 85256. Agenda: Future of the SR Landfill, Community Member Comments. For the district meeting agenda, please visit the SRPMIC Council District Meeting information website: <https://tinyurl.com/SRPMICDMs>. SRPMIC Council Secretaries Office: (480) 362-7469
- 20 SRPMIC PRIMARY ELECTION**, 6:00 am - 6:00 pm, Salt River ID required to vote. District I (Salt River): Salt River Community Building District II (Lehi): Lehi Community Building
- 22 CM BUTLER DISTRICT A MEETING**, 6:00 pm at SRPMIC Council Chambers 10091 E. Osborn Road Scottsdale, AZ 85256. Agenda: Environmental Programs & Resources, Community Member Comments. For the district meeting agenda, please visit the SRPMIC Council District Meeting information website: <https://tinyurl.com/SRPMICDMs>. SRPMIC Council Secretaries Office: (480) 362-7469
- 24 VEHICLE AUCTION VIEWING DAY (2 OF 2)**, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Vehicle Storage Lot (by Dialysis center). See description for event on 17th for full details.
- 23-25 ROY TRACK MEMORIAL MESA POW WOW**, Join us for the 42nd Annual Roy Track Memorial Mesa Powwow! 860 North Riverview Park, 85201. MC: Dennis Bowen, Arena Director: Colby Afradofhistracks, Host Northern Drum: Northern Mixx, Host Southern Drum: Chris Dinedeal. Friday, October 23: 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm, Social Bird Singing and Dancing: 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm. For more info, contact Annette Vest at 480-453-3750. Saturday, October 24: 11:00 am - 10:00 pm, AZ Territory Gourd Society: 11:00 am & 5:00 pm, Grand Entry: 1:00 pm & 7:00 pm. Sunday, October 25: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm, AZ Territory Gourd

- Society: 11:00 am; Grand Entry: 1:00 pm. For more information: Call 602-799-0260 Email mesapowwow@gmail.com
- 26 SRPMIC PRESIDENT FORUMS (GENERAL ELECTION)**, 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm at Salt River Community Building
- 29 SRPMIC PRESIDENT FORUMS (GENERAL ELECTION)**, 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm, Lehi Community Building
- 30 FALL FESTIVAL SPOOKTACULAR**, SRPMIC Fall Festival meets Salt River Schools Spooktacular for one epic night of ghouls, goblins, and family fun! Time: 5:30 pm - 9:00 pm, Location: ALA Football Field. Featuring: Outdoor Movie: Monsters Inc., Trunk or Treat: 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm, Costume Contests: 0-5 years old, 6-10 years old, 11-15 years old, 16+ years old. Prizes for best costumes! Spooky Beats: DJ Reflekshin; Free Pizza (while supplies last). This is a no alcohol/drug/vaping event. No pets, weapons/firearms, or outside ice chests/grills/food/glass allowed. Bags subject to search.
- FOR THE LATEST DISTRICT MEETINGS SCHEDULE, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW:**
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- SOAM MAŞAD XLY'A SHAXUK MAYK SHENTH NOVEMBER**
- 3 SRPMIC VICE-PRESIDENT FORUMS (GENERAL ELECTION)**
- 5 SRPMIC VICE-PRESIDENT FORUMS (GENERAL ELECTION)**
- 7-8 RED MOUNTAIN EAGLE POW WOW**
- 9 NOVEMBER COMMUNITY PRAYER BREAKFAST**